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Message Text

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TAGS: USSAEC

SUBJECT: VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROJECT

REF: USREP MESSAGE NO. 124 SEP 2475

REQUEST EMBASSY PASS FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO MR. MORGAN,
DIRECTOR, USREP OFFICE:

1. IN REF MESSAGE YOU REPORTED ON DISCUSSIONS WITH DEPUTY MINISTER AL-FAYEZ AND HIS QUESTIONS CONCERNING CONSTRUCTION AND THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROJECT. THE FOLLOWING CONSTITUTES AN INTERIM RESPONSE TO THAT TELEX.

2. BECAUSE THE HANDLING OF CONTRACTS UNDER THE JOINT
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COMMISSION WAS AN UNRESOLVED ISSUE, THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING

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TEAM WAS UNDER INSTRUCTIONS LAST MAY TO EXPLORE THE MAGNITUDE OF THE CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM BUT NOT TO MAKE ANY FIRM COMMITMENTS REGARDING CONSTRUCTION. WHILE THE CONSTRUCTION ELEMENT WAS LEFT SOMEWHAT UP IN THE AIR, THE FOLLOWING POINTS EMERGED DURING THE TEAM'S FINAL MEETINGS WITH AL-FAYEZ: (A) THAT THE LABOR DEPARTMENT WOULD NOT

ASSIST IN THE FURTHER FACILITATION OF THE CONSTRUCTION ASPECTS OF THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROJECT, IN LIGHT OF AL-FAYEZ' INDICATION THAT HE WAS INTERESTED IN EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITY OF THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS (COE) UNDERTAKING THE CONSTRUCTION AND (B) THAT IT WAS AT LEAST POSSIBLE THAT THE CONSTRUCTION WOULD BE DONE COMPLETELY OUTSIDE OF THE JOINT COMMISSION FRAMEWORK.

3. A USG POLICY WITH REGARD TO CONTRACTING HAS NOW BEEN DEVELOPED. THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THIS POLICY ARE CONTAINED IN A MEMORANDUM WHICH WAS GIVEN TO DR. AL-TURKI BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY PARSKY ON 5 SEPTEMBER (COPY HAS BEEN SENT TO YOU). IN ESSENCE THIS POLICY IS THAT: THE USG WILL NOT SIGN CONTRACTS EXCEPT UNDER UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES NOR SELECT CONTRACTORS FOR U.S. PRIVATE SECTOR WORK TO BE DONE UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE JOINT COMMISSION. HOWEVER, UNDER THIS POLICY, THE APPROPRIATE USG AGENCIES ARE PREPARED TO ASSIST IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS: (A) DRAFT REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS FROM FIRMS (B) DEVELOP CRITERIA FOR REVIEW OF RESPONSES BY INTERESTED FIRMS (C) ASSIST THE SAG IN THE GENERAL EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED BY SUCH FIRMS (D) PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING ON THE OVERALL SUBSTANTIVE CONTENT OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS. NOTE THAT THE EXCEPT UNDER UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES PHRASE IS NOT REPEAT NOT CONTAINED IN MEMO GIVEN TO AL-TURKI.

4. IT IS NOT YET COMPLETELY RESOLVED WHETHER THIS POLICY WILL APPLY TO ANY POTENTIAL COE INVOLVEMENT IN THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROJECT. HOWEVER, IT IS LIKELY THAT THE POLICY WILL APPLY AND THAT THE CORPS WILL NOT PARTICIPATE. ASIDE FROM THESE POLICY CONSIDERATIONS, THE CORPS IS ALREADY STRETCHED TO THE LIMIT WITH WORK
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REQUESTS AND WOULD BE UNABLE AT THIS TIME TO UNDERTAKE ANY NEW CONSTRUCTION WORK FOR MLSA. WE BELIEVE THAT AN APPROACH WHICH FOLLOWS THE STEPS OUTLINED IN PARA 3 WOULD NOT INVOLVE THE CORPS BUT WOULD BE RESPONSIVE TO SAG NEEDS.

5. IF THE SAG WANTS THE USG TO PROVIDE ALL OR SOME OF THE SERVICES DESCRIBED IN PARA 3 WITH REGARD TO THE

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CONSTRUCTION OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTERS, IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO NEGOTIATE AN AGREEMENT, WHICH WOULD IN EFFECT BE AN ADDENDUM TO THE CURRENT PROJECT AGREEMENT. IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE USG WOULD PROVIDE THIS ASSISTANCE BY MAKING AVAILABLE SEVERAL CONTRACTING AND ENGINEERING

SPECIALISTS TO WORK WITH THE MLSA TO DEVELOP A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL.

6. ONCE SUCH A REQUEST IS DEVELOPED, THE COMMERCE DEPARTMENT IS PREPARED TO EXPEDITIOUSLY CONTACT THE U.S. BUSINESS COMMUNITY CONCERNING THE POSSIBILITY OF A&E WORK WITH THE MINISTRY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS.

7. IN THE INTEREST OF MOVING AHEAD QUICKLY ON THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROJECT, IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT CONSTRUCTION BE DELT WITH IN A SEPARATE ADDENDUM TO THE AGREEMENT, SO THAT THE SIGNING OF AND THE INITIATION OF THE WORK UNDER THE EXISTING PROJECT AGREEMENT WOULD NOT BE UNDULY DELAYED. MORE INFORMATION ON THIS SUBJECT WILL BE PROVIDED WHEN AVAILABLE. KISSINGER

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